



Framing continues

Framing work continues in the Village I as the new privatized housing project takes shape at Kirtland AFB. The view is from a roof of a unit in Village II. As part of the framing stage, windows and doors are being installed, and the roofs are "dried in," black roofing paper rolled over the roof decking. While no homes are completed, electrical "rough-ins" and plumbing "top-outs" have started and are progressing well.

Photo by Michael G. Davis

STARBASE

otherwise might avoid these subjects. By showing school children today what interesting and important careers the serious study of science and math can lead to, we are helping to shape the defense researchers of tomorrow. And that is the pay-off for the Air Force," she said.

"Academy curriculum is divided into three student courses or 'flights.' They are designed to inspire eager kids who believe math and science are beyond them because those subjects are either too difficult, or too dull," said Ms. Cole, a teacher with the Rio Rancho Public School system assigned full time to the Academy to help unite the Air Force and community in this common goal.

Ms. Cole explained that STARBASE La Luz (Spanish for 'The Light')—part of a national STARBASE effort started at Michigan's Selfridge Air National Guard Base in 1989—brings much-needed centralized real estate to an ongoing AFRL educational outreach effort that began in New Mexico in 1992.

"We've had a lot of experience with our students over the last decade, touching the lives of more than 60,000 young people. STARBASE Academy now gets us all under one roof, so to speak. It is also the first time a STARBASE has been built at an active-duty Air Force base." Ms. Cole said.

"Here's how it works. AFRL supplied many, but not all, of the science and engineering experts. They are role models working full-time in their own federal careers at the Kirtland Technology Park, either as space scientists or directed energy researchers. Yet

they also mentor students by overseeing academy science and technology projects constructed to be interesting to the student and relevant to the Air Force," Ms. Cole explained.

The three academy science and engineering "flights" that have evolved from projects begun 10 years ago, include the Students Planning and Conducting Engineering, or SPACE; Providing Engineering and Technology Experiences for Students, or PETES; and the Mars Missions.

"Several years back our SPACE students, who are high-school students designing and performing year-long, real-world research and development projects with AFRL-provided mentors, designed an electro-magnetic satellite door that could be electronically closed in the event of a potentially harmful meteor storm. Successful? You bet. They got a patent for their invention, which was covered by CNN," said Ms. Cole.

"Our PETES flight aids the younger student's transition between elementary and middle school by fostering student mentoring among fifth and sixth graders. In addition, sixth, seventh and eighth graders come to the academy for instruction on the basic concepts of flight, model rocketry, teamwork and Air Force Core values, such as 'Integrity First,' 'Excellence in All We Do,' and 'Service Before Self.' "The academy's Mars Missions, based on the Challenger Center's Marsville—the Cosmic Village, is perhaps the most widely known program with chapters in many other states. This flight is expressly for fifth-grad-

ers and is a classroom simulation where student teams rely on cooperation and innovation to actually build a habitat prototype of a colony on Mars. This is our tenth year for the Mars project, and so many participants enrolled that we had to hold the event in four cities around the state on different days. Enthusiasm is very high—we have the largest Marsville program in the country," Ms. Cole added.

The goal for each of these flights is to instill excitement and appreciation for math, science, engineering and technology. Students who complete the SPACE and PETES flights receive an Air Force STARBASE La Luz Academy diploma.

AFRL works closely with TEAM KIRTLAND members here, who include Sandia National Laboratories, the 377th Air Base Wing, the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center, as well as others outside the base from private industry and academia. This diverse combination fosters an

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ideal learning environment that teaches young students not only academic "book-learning" theory, but industrial application.

"When a student can see and touch the actual results of their experiments, it is then that they begin to lose their fear of subjects traditionally thought too difficult to conquer," said Ms. Cole.

"Once a student gets a glimpse of the possibilities for their future, it is then he or she realizes that mastering math and science is required to achieve their dream," said Ms. Cole, an award-winning teacher.

"That's what teachers do. And that is what we do here at the Air Force STARBASE La Luz Academy—get kids hooked on their own dreams. No force in the universe is more powerful! We make that possible by revealing what is possible, what education can do to help them discover their own talents, and then give them the experience working with professional researchers solving actual problems related to national defense." Ms. Cole said.

PROMOTION

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ered 16,516 master sergeants for a 9.48 percent select rate—3.48 percent above the minimum promotion rate objective of six percent.

The average score for those selected was 671.72, with an average time in grade and time in service of 4.70 and 20.15 years respectively.

The average score was based on:

- ★ 134.98 points for enlisted performance reports;
- ★ 34.02 for time in grade;
- ★ 21.17 for time in service;
- ★ 20.47 for decorations;
- ★ 69.13 for Air Force supervisory examination;
- ★ 391.95 for board score.

Those selected will be promoted beginning in April.



Photo by Lisa Gonzales

Hair you go, sweetie!

Priscilla Pelletier, Airborne Laser System Program Office, Kirtland AFB learned about Locks of Love when a colleague donated her hair to the nonprofit organization that makes hairpieces for children who have lost their hair due to illness or treatment like cancer therapy. Ms. Pelletier grew her hair for two years to meet the organization's length requirement of 10 inches of donated hair before having her stylist, Hermone Montoya, cut her hair March 5. All ages, both genders and all colors of untreated hair can be used. For information about Locks of Love, visit the Web site at www.locksoflove.org.

WOMAN OF THE WEEK

Dr. Ellen Ochoa

In 1990, California-born Ellen Ochoa was selected by NASA and became the first Hispanic female astronaut.

Since 1991 she has been on two space flights, logging more than 480 hours in space.

As a doctoral student at Stanford, and later as a researcher at Sandia National Laboratories and NASA Ames Research Center, Dr. Ochoa investigated optical systems for performing information processing.

She is a co-inventor on three patents for an optical inspection system, an optical object recognition method and a method for noise removal in images.

Ellen is the recipient of numerous awards for her scholarship as well as her technical contributions to humanity.

Ellen's dream is to help build a space station, which she says is "critical...to human exploration in space, a transportation mode to new frontiers."

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Events

March 24

7:30 a.m., reveille, Hardin Field

March 24

noon-1p.m., "An American Woman in Iran,"

Education Building 39,

Albuquerque Veterans Affairs Medical Center

The New Mexico Veterans Affairs Health Care System's Federal Women's Program sponsors a Women's History Month event presented by Rochelle Lari, program leader for the Sandia National Laboratories' Diversity Leadership Program.

For more information, contact Dorothy Beckner, 265-1711, extension 4911 or Cordy Garcia, extension 5614.

March 25

noon, Brown Bag Lunch, "Focus on Possibility,"
Mountain View Club, Ballroom

Guest Speaker Naomi Sandweiss portraying Bertha Gusdorf: from immigrant bride to New Mexico's first woman bank president. Light food and drinks will be provided.

Call Maj. Fran Hagel, 846-3532.